

10-1-1973

## U.S. News and World Report - 'A Better Feeling' Between Congress and Nixon Page 26

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "U.S. News and World Report - 'A Better Feeling' Between Congress and Nixon Page 26" (1973). *Mike Mansfield Speeches*. 1126.  
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# U.S. News & WORLD REPORT®

THE UNITED STATES NEWS®

WORLD REPORT®

50 CENTS

OCTOBER 1, 1973

## AGNEW AND HIS FUTURE

# New Battles Inside The White House



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Vol. LXXV No. 14

OCTOBER 1, 1973

## U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

The Only News Magazine Devoted Entirely  
To National and International Affairs

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Cover: USN&WR Photo

"U.S. News & World Report" goes to press on Friday night. Beginning on the following Monday, the current issue is available at the newsstands for one week—until the date printed on the cover. Extra copies desired should be bought before the cover date.

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U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT is published weekly, at \$12 per year, by U.S. News & World Report, Inc., at 2300 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. POSTMASTERS: Send Form 3579 to U.S. News & World Report, P.O. Box 2054, Rock Island, Illinois 61207. Second Class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Vol. LXXV, No. 14, October 1, 1973.



## WHAT NIXON WANTS

[continued from preceding page]

Democrats in Congress argue they are only reasserting constitutional power which has been yielded to Presidents by Congress over the last four decades.

Mr. Nixon is described as certain to veto these bills and confident of being sustained. His record of vetoes in his battles with the 93rd Congress seems to bear out the President's confidence.

On September 19, for example, the House sustained Mr. Nixon's veto of a boost in the minimum wage to \$2.20 an hour by next year. This marked his sixth victory out of six veto votes this year.

Mr. Nixon needs the support of only one third plus one of the members of either house in Congress to prevail on veto votes. If most Republicans stick with the President, Mr. Nixon's vetoes will be upheld.

One thing is considered sure: More

tests of the President's vetoes lie ahead. The President has said he will veto money bills or other legislation he considers "budget busting." Many Democrats want to cut the Administration's request for defense funds and transfer these "savings" to domestic programs.

... **Or compromise.** Nevertheless, compromises are foreseen. A top possibility: pension reform aimed at protecting retirement benefits of 30 million workers. It passed the Senate September 19. Agreement on a new minimum-wage bill also has a chance.

Hope for future agreements between the President and Democratic leaders is being encouraged by signs that the two sides were ready to tone down some of their strong rhetoric about each other.

Mr. Nixon held breakfast meetings with congressional leaders, urged talks on spending with his budget officials and dispatched his top counselors to the Capitol for discussions.

Senator Mike Mansfield (Dem.), of Montana, the Senate Majority Leader, predicted more agreements could be reached with the Administration in the future than during Mr. Nixon's first term.

What's clear, though, is that on votes other than vetoes, Mr. Nixon faces tough sledding to win.

The party lineup in both the House and Senate is precisely the same Mr. Nixon faced when this era of divided government began in 1969. The Senate: 57 Democrats, 43 Republicans. The House: 243 Democrats, 192 Republicans.

As the chart on page 25 shows, the President has had low support from Congress on issues he favors.

Despite the outlook for little action, some lawmakers do not view it with alarm. Said one Southern Democrat:

"Too often Congress is rated on what it has passed or hasn't passed. I think a lot of people would prefer we didn't plow any new ground."

## "LATELY, A BETTER FEELING" BETWEEN CONGRESS AND NIXON

### Interview With Mike Mansfield, Senate Majority Leader

**Behind all the talk: What's the real chance for Nixon-Congress co-operation? What new laws can Americans expect this year? And in 1974? The Senate's top Democrat gives his outlook on these key questions in this exclusive interview.**

**Q** Senator Mansfield, what are the chances for a true conciliation between the White House and the Democrats in Congress?

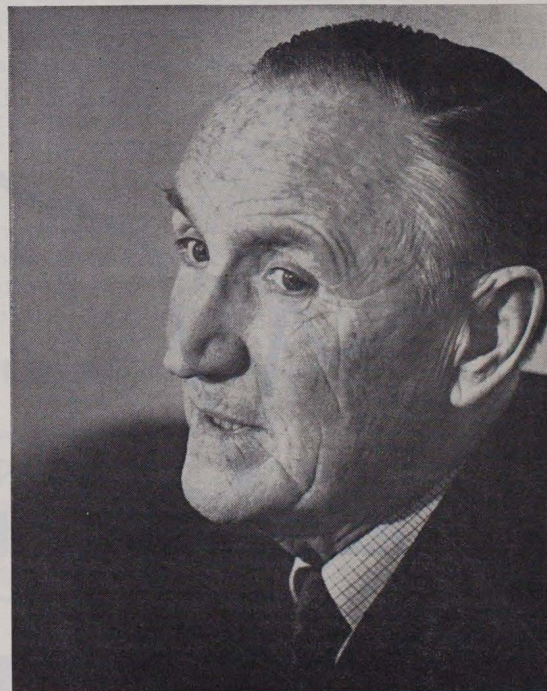
**A** Good, I think. The Congress has always been willing to go at least halfway with the executive branch in the consideration and disposition of legislation.

I think lately there has been a better feeling of conciliation and negotiation and understanding—I might say accommodation, as well. So while there will be differences between the two branches of the Government, which is only natural, I think there will be more areas in which agreements can be reached than was the case in the first four years of this Administration.

**Q** Is the chance for co-operation going to be upset by President Nixon's criticism of Congress's legislative record so far this year?

**A** The record will indicate the Congress has done a very good job, all things considered, in the first session of this Congress. Those statements from the President are the kind you sort of take with a shrug of the shoulder. They are made by Presidents about the Congress, and they are made by Congresses about Presidents.

The only thing we want to do—and will do—is to try and work constructively and not become obsessed in affairs out-



Senator Mansfield



side the regular work of the Senate. We think that rhetoric will not solve any problems, but action and results and votes will.

**Q** If Congress and President Nixon do co-operate during the next few months, what specific legislation will Congress pass?

**A** It's hard to say, because we are going to try and adjourn some time in October.

We'll have to pass all the appropriation bills. There will be some differences. One or two of them may well be vetoed because they do not meet with the President's full approval.

We would hope that something could be done to work out a good minimum-wage law, which the President has vetoed. We think there's room for accommodation in a strip-mine bill, in such matters as trade, and on such questions as impoundment and executive privilege.

Campaign financing, embodied in a good bill, has already been passed by the Senate. What action the House will take this year is indeterminate at the moment. The Senate has passed a private-pension bill this year, too, but my guess is that the House might not get to it until next year.

**Q** The President emphasized a number of proposals in his "new state-of-the-union message." How many of these will be passed by Congress?

**A** Most of them. As of now, the Senate has passed about 24 or 25 of the 50 specific suggestions he made. Others—about 12—are ready for floor action, being worked up, or hearings have been completed by committees.

As far as trade and tax revision are concerned, action would have to be taken in the House before the Senate could act. So already we have made a sizable dent in the President's legislative proposals, and we've done that in addition to acting on proposals which the Congress itself thought were of sufficient value.

**Q** Are any of President Nixon's proposals out of the question for this year?

**A** Yes, there are some which will be most difficult to consider this year.

An education law, which he would like new action on, does not expire until the middle of next year. If we don't pass it, we can attend to it next year.

It's highly doubtful that he will get a trade bill out of the Congress this year. He would be very fortunate if he gets one out of the House itself.

It takes a long time to consider some of these technical and difficult pieces of legislation. Whereas the House can spend a number of months on a trade bill—and rightly so—we in the Senate can't be expected to do in a matter of a few weeks the kind of a job which a bill of that nature calls for.

## "ENERGY BILLS HAVE HIGH PRIORITY"—

**Q** What about energy? Besides the Alaska pipeline, will other proposals be taken up?

**A** Yes, I think so. Senator Jackson [chairman, Interior and Insular Affairs Committee] is working on an energy research-and-development proposal which will call for the expenditure of billions of dollars over a span of years. There will be other energy proposals coming out of Senator Jackson's and other committees, and I think that our record in that respect will look very good before we adjourn for this session.

These energy bills have a high priority. We recognize the difficulties which confront us.

**Q** What is the outlook on taxes? President Nixon said on September 5 that there isn't a chance Congress will pass a responsible tax bill in time to deal with inflation—

**A** Yes, he did state that, which indicates to me that he



With Mr. Nixon. "I would agree with the President that a tax bill this year is out of the question," remarks Mr. Mansfield.

is not desirous of sending up any tax legislation. I think the one way to test the Congress is to present legislation to it and see what the Congress will do—not anticipate beforehand.

**Q** Would Congress approve a tax increase?

**A** If it was proven that a tax increase was necessary to deflate inflation—to increase economic stability—I think it would be given the most serious consideration.

As far as a tax bill this year is concerned, I would agree with the President that it is out of the question. As far as the Senate is concerned, we would have to wait for action on the part of the House.

**Q** You mentioned the possibility of more presidential vetoes. Will Congress cut defense spending so much that the President would veto the defense appropriations bill?

**A** I would assume that he would consider most seriously the vetoing of a defense bill if it was cut too deeply. How deep is "too deep" I don't know. But I think that the defense bill can be cut drastically—I would hope somewhere in the vicinity of 5 or 6 billion dollars. Too much has been spent on too many exotic weapons. Too many of these weapons have not proven out. I think the loss, on that basis, is in excess of 40 billion dollars today.

Something should be done about the 600,000 military personnel plus 400,000 dependents we have at bases overseas, not including the U.S. civilian employees and foreign nationals who are working and being paid by the U.S.

There ought to be a further reduction in the size of the military, although I must note in all candor that President Nixon, since he has been in office, has reduced the military forces from 3.5 million to about 2.2 million. But I think that total could be cut to about 1.8 million. When troops are withdrawn overseas, they shouldn't be stationed here in the United States; they ought to be discharged.

**Q** On your point about new weapons, will Congress vote for a stretch-out in development of the Trident-missile submarine and the B-1 supersonic bomber, as some critics want?

**A** I think that's what the Senate would like to see done: a stretch-out so that further experimentation could take place. The military services apparently want to speed up the projects without undergoing a thorough research-and-development phase.

The cost of the Trident has to be figured in the billions of dollars. The B-1s will have to be figured in the millions and millions of dollars. I think we've gone a little bit hay-

(continued on next page)



## INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR MANSFIELD

[continued from preceding page]

wire in some of these things. We seem to forget that simple things can be effective, that exotic things can be troublesome and difficult to undertake. Simplicity would be more beneficial and more in the nature of a sound defense than would most of these weapons which are being tried out on the drawing board.

**Q** Senator, isn't it going to be difficult for you to enact measures that President Nixon interprets as a challenge to executive authority? When he vetoes bills, Congress has not had much success in overriding those vetoes—

**A** That's true, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't attempt to bring about a correction of the imbalance between the executive and the legislative branches. If we get defeated once, we ought to try and try and try again until the constitutional balance between the two branches of the Government is finally restored.

We really have no one but ourselves to blame, because for



President Nixon greets members of Congress at a joint session. "Congress is in a stronger position this year than in the first four years of the present Administration," Mr. Mansfield says.

too many years, too many decades—since about 1933—the Congress has either willingly or unknowingly allowed much of its constitutional power to be transferred to the executive. And once the executive gets that power, it doesn't want to let go. It's easy to give, it's hard to take back; but we'll keep on trying.

**Q** What do you expect will happen in the fight over the bill now in conference concerning presidential war powers?

**A** From all I've heard, the President intends to veto it because he thinks it's an infringement on his powers. I think exactly the opposite: It is a reassertion of the powers of the Congress as enunciated in the Constitution. But if he vetoes it, we'll try and try and try again, because one defeat doesn't mean you've lost a war. We'll just keep on trying till the will of the Congress prevails, and we'll do it on the basis of the constitutional doctrine.

**Q** Looking ahead, does the fact that the country has a divided Government and next year is an election year cloud the prospects for legislation in 1974?

**A** I wouldn't think so. I would say that the Congress is in a stronger position this year and will be next year than it was in the first four years of the present Administration.

Last year the American people re-elected Mr. Nixon by a very large majority, but at the same time added to the Democratic majority in the Senate while reducing the Democratic majority in the House only slightly. Americans really plumped for a divided Government, a Government based on checks and balances. In that way it's possible for us to counterbalance each other and, hopefully, work in the best interests of the people as a whole.

**Q** By voting for a divided Government, did the people also vote for not much new action by the Government?

**A** That's quite possible.

For President Nixon to get the vote that he did indicates Americans had a certain degree of compatibility with the programs which he was advocating and the policies which he was endeavoring to pursue. But at the same time, I think it indicated a certain amount of confidence in the Congress—a recognition of the fact that if there is going to be a stabilizing factor it could well be in the body of men and women who represent the people most closely and who are nearest to them at all times.

**Q** What is the prospect, then, for passage of national health insurance and other major proposals next year?

**A** I hope they do pass. A national-health-insurance program of reasonable proportions is long overdue. I would hope that the proposals made by the President, which are too skimpy, and some of those made by my colleagues in the Congress, which are too extravagant, could be brought more closely together so that a good health program could be put into operation and then improved on as time went on.

## WHERE CONFLICT IS STILL LIKELY—

**Q** Do you see the offer of Roy Ash, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to meet with leaders of Congress on budget matters as a forerunner of more accommodation between the two branches of Government, as some have suggested?

**A** It was a fine gesture on the part of Mr. Ash. I hope it is much more than a gesture.

As far as the President is concerned, he has made a crusade out of spending. He has gotten a lot of credit for setting a spending ceiling.

But what seems awfully difficult to get over to the American people is the fact that this Democratic-controlled Congress, during the first four years of the present Administration, reduced the President's budget requests by more than 20 billion dollars and that, notwithstanding, in those four years of the present Administration, our deficit was increased by more than 104 billion dollars.

What we'll do this year is to carry out what has become a long-standing practice—in fact, a tradition—in the Senate, and that is to reduce the President's budget request well below the 268.9 billion dollars which he sent down.

**Q** Could a battle over legislation postpone the adjournment of Congress until after October?

**A** I wouldn't think so, because all legislation stays alive when we wind up this year. It will be extant next year when we return.

**Q** There has been some talk that the President will call Congress back into session if you adjourn without passing his program. Do you expect he will do that?

**A** That's always a possibility. The President has that authority. He can call us back at any time he wants to on the basis of his definition of what is "serious" legislation and the need for it at the moment. But, frankly, I do not see the President calling us back once we go out this year. [END]